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## **RTA expands services**

**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** – The Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) Board of Directors is operating two new bus routes and a number of other service improvements as part of its fall system changes, Cary Foust Street, Regional Transportation Authority Communications and Marketing Specialist stated.

Some of these improvements will directly affect Murfreesboro, she and Murfreesboro Transportation Director Dana Richardson said.

In June, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Board of Directors voted to approve new and expanded express bus service to Murfreesboro, Smyrna, La Vergne and Gallatin.

Beginning Oct. 1, three new bus routes – Routes 84-X, Murfreesboro Express; 86-X to Smyrna and LaVergne and 87-X Gallatin Express began service.

These new routings will be available to all RTA customers, including those in Murfreesboro.

“We are definitely ramping up service between Nashville and Rutherford County,” Murfreesboro Transportation Director Dana Richardson said. “This is a three year experiment to see if expanded regional service between Murfreesboro, Smyrna and LaVergne is viable. Federal funding will underwrite a majority of the cost of this expansion which increases the traditional service of 16 trips per day between Rutherford County and Nashville to 31 trips per day. The expanded RTA service was also designed to provide connection between Murfreesboro’s Rover public transportation system and the RTA buses so that users of our local system can transfer to and from Nashville buses at the transfer center located at the intersection of Walnut and Burton streets”.

The Route 84-X Murfreesboro Express begins service at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), continues to a new Park-‘n-Ride lot located at the North Boulevard Church of Christ on North Rutherford Boulevard, and then continues on to Rutherford and Northfield boulevards and Northwest Broad Street then directly to downtown Nashville via SR-840 and I-24.

Sept. 1, a new University Connector cross-town route began, as did a new route in the Hickory Hills area near Whites Creek the same day.

“We’ll be right at the starting gate when the new 28th/31st Avenue Bridge opens,” MTA CEO Paul J. Ballard said. “Riders want more cross-town routes; this new bridge just begs for this one.”

Besides MTSU, the Route 21 University Connector will provide cross-town service connecting six universities including Tennessee State University, Meharry Medical

College, Fisk University, Vanderbilt University, Belmont University and Lipscomb University.

In Nashville, buses will travel via the new 28th/31st Avenue Bridge every 30 to 60 minutes on weekdays and hourly on weekends.